

HOW AN ABUSIVE PARTNER CAN AFFECT YOU AS A MOTHER



for
Women

An abusive partner can affect all parts of your life, including parenting.

Did any of these things affect your ability to be the best mother you could be?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I was stressed out and worried all the time | <input type="checkbox"/> I still feel this |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I was emotionally and physically exhausted, worn down, drained of energy | <input type="checkbox"/> I still feel this |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I had no confidence in my abilities as a mother | <input type="checkbox"/> I still feel this |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I never had enough money to take care of my children properly | <input type="checkbox"/> This is still true |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I was constantly afraid for our safety | <input type="checkbox"/> This is still true |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I drank too much or took drugs to cope | <input type="checkbox"/> This is still true |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I felt like running away from life and my responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> I still feel this |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other: | |

An abusive man can interfere with your parenting.

Did any of these things happen?

- he insulted me so much the children had no respect for me as a person
- the children did not listen to me as a parent or obey my rules
- he made me do the demanding or unpleasant tasks (diapers, homework, saying “no”), and only did things he enjoyed or let him look good to others
- he criticised me as a bad mother
- he spoiled the children so I had to be the one to set limits and say “no”
- he refused advice from me about how to be a better father
- he threatened to call the CAS about me
- he threatened to take the children back to our/his home country
- he did not give me enough money to take care of the family
- he said if I didn’t do what he wanted, he would hit the children
- other:

After you separated, have any of these things happened?

- he has the children spy on me or bring messages back to me
- he tells them the separation is my fault (“If it weren’t for your mom, we’d be together as a family”)
- he won’t let me get counselling for the children
- he freaks out when my new partner treats my children like a father does
- he refuses to pay child support or is pressuring me to accept little or no child support
- I worry if the children are safe when they visit him
- he is fighting me in court to get custody of the children
- he fought in court to visit them and now leaves them with relatives or babysitters when they visit
- he called the CAS about me
- other:

With the children, here are some things you may have seen...

- he had rules that are too strict
- he applied the rules unfairly or inconsistently
- he used harsh discipline, sometimes physical discipline like spanking or worse
- he expected them to act or understand things as if they were adults
- he took it out on them if he had a bad day
- he didn't understand them as individuals
(e.g., that one is allergic to strawberries and one is afraid of dogs)
- he ignored them except when in the mood to be a father or was lonely
- he was too permissive, or swung between strict control and letting them do anything
- he expected them to behave as if we were still back home in our country
- other:

How did this affect the children?

- they get confused about what the rules really are
- they are treating me like he treated me
- they don't listen to me because they do not respect me as a parent
- they want to live with him because he lets them get away with anything
- they get caught between Canadian society and our ways from back home
- they think girls are not as good as boys
- other:

Do any of these statements describe you as you look back?

- I was quick to get angry at the children because I was so tired and frustrated
- I expected them to change their behaviour to keep him happy
(e.g, being extra quiet)
- I wish I had praised them more and told them they are good kids
- I wish I had paid more attention to them
- I stayed with him too long because I thought they needed a father
- I would sometimes let them "get away with things" because their father was so strict
- other:

Read the list of what you checked off. Are any of these things still true?

Which ones have you changed?